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of Mining Engineers, stressed the limitations of individual initiative and development, and the crying need for definite, comprehensive programs for the solution of our great engineering problems. These things have influenced the A. S. M. E. to take the step of organizing this section with the hope that, through cooperation with all the agencies interested in and working in this field, general good will be brought to the whole industry.

#### COMMITTEE ON PROBLEMS OF ELECTRICAL INSULATION

THE National Research Council has planned an investigation of the principles of insulation, a matter which is of vital importance to the electrical trade and to its consumers. A meeting of the council's insulation committee was held recently at the laboratories of the Western Electric Company at 463 West Street, New York City. It was attended by a number of engineers and physicists, the chief engineer of the Western Electric Company, Dr. F. B. Jewett, who is chairman of the committee, presiding.

A preliminary meeting of the committee was held a year ago, but at that time no definite plans were formulated. At this meeting it was decided that the first step is the gathering together of all the published and known scientific material relating to insulation. This is a large undertaking and the committee decided that a permanent salaried secretary should be engaged to carry on the compilation of the material which has already been published and to maintain continuity in the records and activities of the committee. The committee also decided that it would attack the technical problems by providing some research men in the universities with funds and materials supplied by the industries under the guidance of the National Research Council. The scarcity of skilled and trained research men, who are capable of attacking insulation problems is a matter of much concern to the insulation committee. An effort will be made to discover among the post-graduate students and the faculties of the

universities men who are able to do this work.

The committee consists of thirty-seven representatives from the electrical industries, the national engineering societies, the national scientific societies, the national manufacturing organizations and the universities and colleges of the country. Among those who attended the meeting were: Mr. C. E. Skinner, Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Co., Dr. Irving Langmuir, General Electric Co., Mr. Percy H. Thomas, Consulting Electrical Engineer, New York, Mr. William A. Del Mar, New York, D. W. Roper, Commonwealth Edison Co., Chicago, Ill., Dr. Clayton H. Sharp, Electrical Testing Laboratories, New York, Professor John Johnston, Yale University, Professor Frederick Bedell, Cornell University, Professor A. E. Kennelly, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Professor K. T. Compton, Princeton University, Edward D. Adams, Engineering Foundation, New York, Dr. Carl Hering, consulting engineer, Philadelphia, Pa., John M. Weiss, The Barrett Company, New York, Dr. Richard C. Tolman, Chemical Division, National Research Council, Washington, D. C., and Dr. F. B. Silsbee, Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C.

#### THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DIRECTOR JAMES HENRY BREASTED, of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, who recently returned from an archeological survey of the Near East, reports that the remarkable collections which the expedition was able to purchase have arrived at the Haskell Oriental Museum and are now unpacked preparatory to their public exhibition.

Among these is a complete group of twenty-five painted limestone mortuary statuettes from Egypt, representing the deceased and the members of his family engaged in all sorts of household activities. They date from the Old Kingdom (3,000 to 2,500 B.C.) and form the most extensive group of such figures ever discovered in one tomb. In addition to a group of royal seal cylinders and a group of some